INTERVIEW WITH MRS. GRACE JOHNSON KIZER

May 9, 1978

Conducted by:

Dr. James L. Dodson

--and--

Miss Lilly Annida Ferretti

Dodson: Now, Mrs. Kizer, I wonder if you would tell us your full name and how long you've been in the valley?

Kizer: My full name is Ida Grace Johnson Honeycutt [sp ?] Kizer, it's a long name. And I was born here in the valley, in Chatsworth, in 1894.

Dodson: Is that right?

Kizer: So I'll be 84 in a few days.

Dodson: And you've presented our museum with a little book, Our Pioneer Mother. Your grandmother who was the pioneer mother of the book..

Kizer: Yes.

Dodson: ..was the first Anglo in the valley, is that correct?

Kizer: That's right, that's right. And then for at least we're living there, their last daughter was born there. Emma, she was the first.. well people used to say white person, but they don't consider the Spanish and the Indians, not Caucasian, you know..

Dodson: No.

Kizer: .. and so they got saying Anglo-Saxon, first Anglo people here. And so, this aunt was very well-known and because of her horseback riding. And you might have heard of her, Emma Graves. She was well-known and was in the papers all over everywhere, pictures of her in parades. She had a room full of trophies that she had taken.

Dodson: I see. So you really lived in the valley for a good part of your life.

Kizer: I lived in the valley 'til 1912 when I was married, then I no longer live here. I haven't since, just to visit here.

Ferretti: ....?.... for years!

Kizer: I forgot about that.

[laughter]

Yeah, that's right.

Dodson: Did you go to school in the valley here?

Kizer: I went to school in Chatsworth. We had through the tenth grade. Then when I was seventeen and through that tenth grade, I went to San Fernando to work as a mother's helper. A teacher over there, who boarded five other teachers were going to help me with my school work while I worked as a mother's helper. And I enjoyed that family, and one of the... of course later on in the years I joined the Native Daughters. And those three girls that I babysat also belonged to the Native Daughters. So once in a while we'd see each other and she's call me her babysitter. She looks older than I do... ha ha ha... but, uhm, I finished what little education I had with him.

Dodson: I see. Do you remember the name of any of your teachers?

Kizer: Well, there was a Miss ...?... [sounds like Callunberger]

We had a Miss Templeton [sp ?], but I think... I read this and I tried to think of a few of the names but I... I just can't. I have a sister who's got a memory that would... have no end! She could tell you the names, probably, of every teacher over there. And that's Maggie ...?... that you've called a time or two about.

Dodson: Yes, we wanted to interview her.

Kizer: But she hasn't been very well.

Dodson: Well that's the reason we have called her in, but she said she hasn't been very well... so we were going to call her later.

Kizer: But she could probably tell you the names of all the teachers. But uhm, I could only remember Miss ...?... I can remember Miss Templeton [sp ?] but I'll tell you... My dad was a miner during... part of our lives and he was working in a mine at San Simeon. And uhm, I remember now that our teacher there was Miss Templeton [sp ?].

Dodson: I see.

Kizer: So that would not be here.

Dodson: When you said he was a miner, I wondered if he was engaged in any of this gold mining that took place in the... around the Newhall area.

Kizer: Well, he was at Randsburg for years. And he worked with ...?... who established, we were talking about, establishing the church in Chatsworth. He came out

there in... I don't know what year it was, 1903 I think. But anyway, he just fell in love with that area. He wrote back for his wife to come, and they came from England. And they bought 120 acres, I belive it was, and he thought it was heaven on earth. And that's where this big home was built. And they donated an acre of it for the establishment of Chatsworth Church which had been meeting in the school room before that.

Dodson: Now where was that Chatsworth Church after it was built?

Kizer: On Topanga... on Topanga Boulevard about half-way between Devonshire and Lassen, and Lassen is the street that goes up to the cemetery.

Dodson: And that's the little church that stands now?

Kizer: It's been moved away. I was there, saw them move it away through the fields up to the cemetery. I happened to be down here from living then...

Dodson: Now you told us that you were there this last Sunday?

Kizer: Yes.

Dodson: How well preserved is the church? Do you remember it as it used...

Kizer: Oh, I didn't go see the church. We went to the new church. The new church has been built about 15 years ago, I believe, right at the foot of Stony Point. And uh, but the old church had been moved away from that up to Oakwood Cemetery where it is a national

museum now.

Dodson: I see. Well since we're talking about churches, can you tell us anything about your religious life in the valley?

Kizer: Well, my religious life in the valley was all in that little church. I think my mother told me I was three weeks old, in those days why they waited a few weeks before they made a public appearance, nowadays they can go the next day!

[Laughter]

Dodson: I see!

Kizer: And uh, but uh, she said I was three weeks old when I started going to church there, but that church was not built until I think 1903... it tells about it in this book. And I was born in '94 so I was a few years old. We went to church in the school, which was on the corner of Devonshire and Topanga Canyon, which is a big corner now.

Dodson: Do you remember any of the early ministers of the church?

Kizer: I remember them well. And it tells in this book, you know, they're listed in there. But I don't know, I can't remember them because I left there at 1912 and I think it was 1912 before they ever got... they would just have itinerant ministers come in. And they depicted this sunday and this pageant that they would put on. The minister coming with this big, flat hat and this long frock and

leading his horse.

Dodson: Did your social life sort of revolve around the church during that time?

Kizer: That's all we had in the way of social life, was go to church. We meet our friends and we'd all try to go to church together. And I was telling Marjie [sp ?] today about how we'd leave the church and we'd go the rounds and leave the ones off here and finally we'd get down... generally the itinerant minister would stay at our house so we'd be the last to get on sunday night.

Dodson: I see. You went morning and night both?

Kizer: Yes, and on Wednesday too. Wednesday night, generally.

Dodson: Would you say that people were more religious then than they are right now? I don't think too many go to church twice a day now.

Kizer: Well, I think if it hadn't been for the entertainment part maybe we wouldn't have gone so much. But we got to see our friends that way.

Dodson: Ha ha ha, I see. Was it a good place to meet boys, too?

Kizer: Well, I just met the boys that I grew up with and they weren't interesting at all. I had to get out of the Los Angeles city before I met someone that looked...

Dodson: Ha ha ha... You didn't care for the home-grown

variety.

Kizer: Ha ha ha... A good many of them were cousins. And this Aunt Emma Graves I told you about a while ago, always had open house for young people. She had five children of her own and one of them had polio when he was... and polio wasn't taken care of then like it is now, so he was a little crippled boy and very dear. Generally, for entertainment, if it wasn't to church it was to Aunt Emma's house. And she'd make popcorn and Uncle raised peanuts and she'd roasts peanuts, and it just seemed like the place to go.. to Aunt Emma's house!

Dodson: Did you have quite a time on Christmas? Did they put on little plays and that sort of thing? And have candy for the children at church?

Kizer: Yes, oh yes. And my dad would pay our monthly grocery bill at the grocery store which was run by Graves and Hill. And each time you pay your bill, they gave them a little bag of candy to bring home. That was the only time we ever had candy.

Dodson: Now, was your father farming at the time or was he entirely a miner?

Kizer: He.. no, he farmed. He was just really a jack-of-all trades, he could do anything. He was a carpenter and he built several of the homes in Chatsworth as the people came there. He's buried up there in the little cemetery, Oakwood... which was the Miranda [sp ?] ranch at the time when I was a kid.

Dodson: Now, Lilly and I went up to the Oakwood Cemetery

but we couldn't find any old graves there. We only found new ones, so I wonder if we went to the right place?

Kizer: Well...

Dodson: I wanted to see if I could find some of the graves of some of the early pioneers, but I didn't.

Kizer: No, I think not because that was uhm, that part of it was established around 1950 or '60, I don't just remember but I...

Ferretti: 1948 it was.

Dodson: All the graves we saw were relatively recent, in the '50s say.. or the '60s or something of that kind.

Voice: When did your dad die?

Kizer: Well... you see, that's why I need a new head that's working...

Dodson: I think the one that you've got is working very well!

Kizer: He died while we were still living in Pacoima.

Ferretti: He was 84 years old.

Kizer: He was 84.

Ferretti: Well, we know when he was born... where's that book...

Kizer: '65, he was born in '65 so.. yeah, from '65 it's 84 years. I think he was just 84.

Ferretti: And he was buried there.

Dodson: I wonder if there isn't an older part of that cemetery that we didn't find?

Kizer: No, no, Charlie Johnson [sp ?] which was my dad's brother, his wife had been burned to death. She had an outdoor fire going where she was boiling clothes, and her clothes caught on fire and burned. And she and a daughter that died soon after, were buried in their... just in their yard up in Chatsworth.

Dodson: I imagine that was done in the early days rather frequently.

Kizer: Yeah. Then since then, since the cemetery have been established, they have taken them up and brought them down to put with the rest of the family that is buried there.

Ferretti: 1949...

Kizer: So, so I know that at the time when my dad was buried they were having to enlarge the cemetery, because you know it started out rather small and they kept adding to it because evidently it's... I haven't been up there for a few years. So evidently it's quite a large cemetery now.

Dodson: When your dad was farming, what sort of things did he raise on the farm?

Kizer: Well we had three and a half acres so he just raised gardens. We had our own cow and our own chickens and our own gardens. And so he worked out mostly, he

really didn't... He worked for these big companies, like the.. ....?.... and they're big branches.

Dodson: Now, at the time when you were a child, had your grandmother or grandfather already sold off, your grandmother sold off the 160 acres ?

Kizer: No, no, she didn't sell. I was married and living in Modesto when she sold.. when that was sold. She stayed there.. well, she stayed until there was only herself and the youngest son. And he wanted to go work for the telephone company. And it was up in the hills, just a little too far to leave her alone and go to work, so they bought an.. I would say an acre down in the valley, almost across from the new.. where the new church is now.

Dodson: I see.

Kizer: And she lived there with her son Norman, who lived beside her, for you know.. for her own safety probably.

Dodson: What did they raise on their farm?

Kizer: Well, they cleared.. they had to clear that 160 acres, but in those days there was a lot more trees because there's been so many fires through there now, you know, it's mostly just brush. But.. my grandfather made a living hauling wood to Los Angeles. And then after they got their fruits and vines and vegetables established, he would then take fruits and vegetables to town. Nearly every tuesday, she would take her horse and buggy and all the butter

and eggs she had accumulated all week. And there was a spring on the place and they built a room around it so as to have it for a cool room, you know, to keep things cool. And I could remember so well big pans of milk, you know, that she'd put in it... and skimmed the cream off. And then we'd churn it and help her in making butter, gathering the eggs, it was a treat to go to Grandma's.

Dodson: I don't know whether I remember from the book how old she was when she came from England. Do you happen to know that?

Kizer: Well, she must've been twelve or thirteen because she married at fourteen.

Dodson: It seems to me that there was quite an adaptation necessary in her life, when she had come from England then to...

Kizer: To come into what...

Dodson: ... such a society that she'd find here.

Kizer: Yeah.

Dodson: But she apparently did very wel.

Kizer: Yeah, everybody loved my Grandma, everybody. And she came to a country where there was no English-speaking people for her to talk to, you know, but she did and did and did for people. You know, acted as midwife as necessary, or help them with sickness, and it just seems like there was a mutual understanding among people even though you can't talk the

language.

Voice: She was four years old when she came here.

Kizer: Four, oh...

Dodson: Then she wouldn't have much recollection.

Kizer: No, that's right.

Dodson: I've forgotten whether it said that or not.

Kizer: Yeah.

Dodson: I was thinking of all the hardships that she'd have to endure.

Kizer: Yes.

Dodson: It was one of the most amazing accounts I have ever read. As I say, when I read about your grandmother it's enough to cause everyone to be...

Kizer: Yes, be everlastingly thankful!

Dodson: Yeah.

Voice: Yes, and look at.. she lived a long life.

Dodson: Yes and your grandfather did too.

Kizer: Yeah. And I didn't, we didn't really know our grandfather real well because he was always on a trip. And in his later years he became an itinerant Baptist preacher. And it just seemed that he'd be home just

a short while, and we'd see him, and he was gone again. So I really never had the love and affection for him that I did for Grandma. She was just so special to me.

Dodson: I see. How old were you when you moved away from the valley, then? You said you were gone for a while?

Kizer: Well, eighteen years old, when I got married. And then I was gone for about twenty years. And my new husband, I had gotten married again, my new husband got work with the Los Angeles County Fire Department. So we established a home in Pacoima.

Ferretti: Van Nuys?

Kizer: First in Van Nuys, yes, then in Pacoima.

Dodson: Where did you live during the period when you left at about eighteen?

Kizer: Modesto.

Dodson: You still stayed in California?

Kizer: We lived.. yes. We lived a year in Los Angeles then we moved to Modesto.

Dodson: I see.

Kizer: So most of these kids of mine... the oldest and the youngest were born in Los Angeles and the rest, five of them, in Modesto.

Dodson: When you were a girl growing up, did you have any particular plans on what you wanted to do?

Kizer: I wanted to be a nurse. I would still.. all through the years I was still about to be a nurse. And during my lifetime I have done quite a bit of nursing but not as a, you know, registered nurse, just as a helper.

Dodson: Did you have any special training along that line?

Kizer: No, no. I wanted to go to school but it's just my folks couldn't send me away to Los Angeles, to school. Now my grandmother made it. She sent, she let her girls go and they worked in homes and made their schooling. And most of them turned out to be teachers, you know... well-educated for those times. But I was the oldest girl and I think I was a help to my mother to the extent that she didn't want to release me.

Dodson: I see, she didn't expect you to get out and work for someone else, or something like that when you were growing up.

Kizer: Yeah. There were five little ones behind me that I had to help with. Except for after I was out of school in Chatsworth, I did go to San Fernando. I lived with the Fraisher family as a mother's helper and finished all my studies.

Dodson: Did you know Ethelwynn, I believe her name is, Fraisher?

Kizer: Ethelwynn, she was the one I was telling you about a

while ago, still calls me the babysitter.

Dodson: I've interviewed her, she was the first person I interviewed.

Kizer: I was going to tell you about her and tell you that you would find and learn a lot from her because she is a historian, she is interested.

Dodson: Now her father was principal or vice-principal?

Kizer: Yeah, he became principal at school, yeah. They were a dear family. And so I still see the girls that I babysat..

Dodson: Is that right?

Kizer: At Native Daughters when I... I belonged to the San Fernando Mission parlor and so did they.

Dodson: Oh, did she have some sisters?

Kizer: Yeah, Martha and Dorothea.

Dodson: Oh, I seem to remember now that she did mention a sister when we were up there. She has quite a doll collection, did you ever see it?

Kizer: Yes I have seen it. And what amazes me is that big house she lives in all by herself. She also has a dog collection, did you hear about the dogs?

Dodson: No, I don't remember. I remember the dolls very well.

Kizer: I said to her, I thought you had to have a kennel license if you had more than three. And she says, no, I keep three in the house with me and there's a guest house out in the back and she registered the other dogs to that home.

[laughter]

Dodson: Ha ha ha... I see. I just don't remember seeing any dogs at all. Maybe she had them out of sight when I was there.

Kizer: She might've, uh huh. But she does make pals. She's quite a gal...

Dodson: Did you hold any other types of jobs, by the way, in your life?

Kizer: No. I have worked all my life at one thing or another. But it was temporary, you know, never a job.

Dodson: Can you tell us anything about how the Depression affected you and the family?

Kizer: Well, now...

Dodson: That's the 1929..

Kizer: I was married then and living in Van Nuys. And my husband had to work to the WPA and we had these five kids at home.. er, six. And we got along.. we got along all right. There were times when we were short certain things but we managed. It didn't seem to affect us too badly.

Dodson: As nearly as from what I can judge from my interviews, people in this valley weren't as badly off as people in some of the eastern cities.

Kizer: Probably not. We didn't own a home, we rented our home. It was a three bedrooms cement home for $18 a month. And then when we were going to move, why, we decided not to buy it. It was cheaper to rent it than it would be to buy it.

Dodson: Yes, at $18 a month, of course money bought a lot more then so...

Kizer: That's right.

Dodson: ..that's a lot higher than it seems now.

Kizer: Yeah.

Dodson: Do you remember anything about how wages did go, then?

Kizer: No, I remember... I remember that we had enough to get by on. And we had our family, six children. Now Marjie [sp ?] here worked at the.. as a cashier at the local show.. movie house and...

Dodson: Was that the one that belongs to Sam Greenberg?

Kizer: Hhm?

Dodson: Do you remember the name Sam Greenberg?

Kizer: It seems like...

Dodson: He owns one of the early theaters.

Kizer: Marjie [sp ?] ... are you available? Well it seems to me that I remember that name. But actually, I think I've had just a real good life. I can't remember any real hardships really.

Dodson: Well apparently your grandmother was the one who had the hardships and then things grew better for the rest of the family after that.

Kizer: Well, yeah. Things grew better for her gradually, because I think a telephone in the house would be a big improvement over living way up in... and so she had her telephone. And water came to the valley and ranches sprung up.. farmers rather than big fields, you know. And I can't remember ever, that there weren't oranges here. Who planted.. I can't remember who planted the orange trees. It must've been...

Dodson: Although we have no oranges in the New World until the Spaniards brought them in. But the orange is not native to the American continent, because that was one of the things the Spaniards gave us.

Kizer: But I remember when I go to my grandmother to San Fernando on tuesdays to deliver her vegetables and fruit, grapes, everything... we stopped at the orange groves and sit and have our lunch, maybe eat one or two and then go on our way. I can't remember before... oranges.

Dodson: Apparently there were a number of types of fruit raised in the valley. Apricots..

Kizer: Yes.

Dodson: ..seems to have been raised, from what I've been told.

Kizer: Yes, lots of apricots.

Dodson: Walnuts apparently..

Ferretti: Grapes?

Dodson: Grapes I don't remember hearing about. Now I know grapes are raised east of here but I don't ever remember that anybody...

Kizer: Well she had a vineyard, I remember that. And all my folks took cuttings from their vineyards. We even had grapes in our place too. My grandma's always tasted better than anybody's. And we could.. she had a reservoir that the spring... so they built a reservoir. And it was quite a nice large place and generally the church would have their baptizing up there. But we could go swimming at grandma's on Sunday afternoon, if we'd been to church sunday. Ha ha ha... we couldn't go up to grandma's... we couldn't go in the water if we hadn't been in church!

Dodson: She was strict on that, was she?

Kizer: Yes sir, yes.. ha ha ha... to be in church. But that was really a sunday outing for us, we'd go with the horse and the wagon. And quite often we'd walk up there, it was about three miles probably, to grandma's... which when you're a kid doesn't seem too far. Nowadays you can't do it.

Dodson: Now for our tape, I wonder if you would tell us exactly where her house was so we could put it on the records here.

Kizer: Well, I can't tell you the name of the street. It's in the mountains west of Chatsworth, west-north of Chatsworth. Also, Santa Susana Pass, and it's adjoining the ranch. And ranch is well-known because of it's movies production up there.

Dodson: And you tell me that the original house is still standing?

Kizer: I.. Margie seems to know about that and I don't know that, I didn't know that. She had a two-story house and that was new to us. We, you know..

Dodson: Well that was rather unusual for that ...?...

Kizer: Yeah, they built a new.. that two-story house. And we'd go to grandma's. But she had a large family and I guess maybe space in that rocks up there would cause them to have a two-story rather than have them all on one floor.

Dodson: It could be.

Kizer: I don't know. Because it was built right in the rocks. But she... she had a nice lawn and garden as I remember, as a child, and orange grove. She even had a tennis court where we could play tennis.

Dodson: Is that right?

Kizer: Yeah.

Dodson: Well things certainly improved for her after the troubles she had.

Kizer: Yeah. She grew.

Dodson: Now you were here when the San Francisco earthquake happened in 1906, weren't you?

Kizer: Yeah, that's right.

Dodson: Do you remember that at all? Feeling a jolt here in the valley?

Kizer: Well I would've been, I would've been twelve years old then. And I don't remember except we've read, you know, and heard about. And then you had to hear it from people, I guess we had papers in those days but we certainly didn't have radio or television.

Dodson: Well some people who were here then told me that they did feel a jolt here in the valley. Now I was surprised that they did.

Kizer: It could be that we did. But I just don't remember it, but I remember how awful we felt about the conditions that were there.

Ferretti: Somebody even said that they saw the smoke, remember?

Dodson: ....?.... is that so?

Ferretti: When ....?.... interview?

Dodson: I don't remember that, but I do remember some people said they felt it all right.

Ferretti: Yeah, like a dark cloud.

Dodson: It could very well be, because that smoke could travel a long ways. Were you here at the time of the Long Beach earthquake in 1934?

Kizer: I lived in Modesto then.

Dodson: I see. You probably didn't feel it up there.

Kizer: No, we didn't feel that.. but I was down here soon after that. And we went to Long Beach and saw all the destruction that was there. I had uh, my mother's parents had died when she was young and she was taken in.. she wasn't adopted but as a foster child, she was taken. And these people lived in Lindsay but they moved, they were quite well-to-do and they had a home in Long Beach. And I remember going to my grandmother's, we call her grandma, and seeing her house shifted off it's foundation, you know. They were still living in the house but it had moved to some extent. So the Long Beach earthquake was quite... you know, I remember it quite well.

Dodson: Yes, that was severe and that did do damage in the valley.

Kizer: Yeah.

Dodson: Because I know several of the schools in Van Nuys had to be condemned after that..

Kizer: Yeah.

Dodson: .. it was strong enough. Were you here during the Sylmar quake?

Kizer: No, I was in Felton then.

Dodson: I see. Where is Felton located in?

Kizer: Well, it's just about nine miles north of Santa Cruz.

Dodson: I see. So that would be quite a little distance away.

Kizer: Yeah, uh hmm.

Dodson: You left the valley at the time they were bringing in water for the first time? Do you remember that?

Kizer: I remember it, and I remember coming to a celebration, but I believe it was when they got the Red Cars running through here. Canoga Park, they renamed the town Owensmouth because the water was coming, or had come, and the water was coming from Owens River so they named the town Owensmouth. And it was a big celebration, I remember these long trains of cars, liquor cars came up, and I came to that.

Dodson: I see.

Kizer: But I think that was because of the established of the town rather than the water.

Dodson: The water came in 1913, I believe.

Kizer: Yeah, well see I was living in, in 1913 my oldest son was born and when he was three weeks old we moved to Modesto.

Dodson: I see.

Kizer: So I evidently didn't go to that.

Dodson: Can you tell us anything about how holidays like the Fourth of July were celebrated?

Kizer: Yes..

Dodson: What did that mean to you when you were a child?

Kizer: It was a big day, the fourth of July. And we would meet in a picnic, the whole town, a picnic under the trees.. down towards Chatsworth Reservoir, by the water...

[tape 1 side 1 ends]

Kizer: ....?.... you know, racing, and big picnic dinners at noon. And the merchants of the town would buy ice cream. I think it was the only time we got to eat all the ice cream we could eat!

Ferretti: Homemade ice cream?

Kizer: No, this wouldn't be homemade. They would bring it, I don't ... they bought it from Los Angeles, how they kept it, I don't even know. I've thought about that since.

Dodson: Well I suppose they would have ice at that time.

Kizer: Yeah, and we had ....?...., I remember them handing 'em... that would be the first time I've ever seen a ...?... and oh my! The next day I wished, oh why didn't I eat just one more?

Ferretti: Do you celebrate Thanksgiving?

Kizer: Well, Thanksgiving was mostly family. We'd either be at my Aunt Emma Graves' or Charlie Johnson's or just our own family. But, uh, lots of times.. I have to tell you about this.. lots of times we went to my grandmother's from when she still lived up in the hills. And on the way up there my dad walked and we went in the wagon. And when he got.. uhm, he ran across a bobcat and they shot it. And when he got to my grandmother's, she had the table all set, had the big platter on the table, the food wasn't in it yet but everything was on the table. And he came in and he laid that big bobcat on that platter.

[laughter]

Dodson: Oh my!

Kizer: I remember that! And then he said something that.. to her, you know, read it, or... finally when she went into the dining room and saw this big animal on the turkey platter.. ha ha.. she was quite amazed!

Dodson: I can imagine! Were there many animals around here in the hills when you were a child?

Kizer: Well, I often think in late years , about how we warned our children, be careful of rattle snakes. And I suppose there was a fear there but our folks

never, we never talk about animals, wild animals, and being careful of lions. And yet there were lions in those hills, and we were never told to be careful of rattlesnakes, and yet there were rattlesnakes and I've seen them killed since I've been grown.

Dodson: Yes, I believe those hills still probably have those rattlesnakes...

Kizer: Probably so.

Dodson: .. you still have to be careful.

Kizer: And yet I don't ever remember, when we were children, encountering a rattlesnake.

Ferretti: This is the season for the rattlesnake.

Dodson: I suppose that's right.

Ferretti: May, yeah.

Dodson: That's one reason why we don't go to
I'm afraid we might run into some.

Ferretti: Marie [sp. ?] told me to be aware of that.

[dog yelps]

Kizer: Oh...?...

Dodson: What happened... I must've put the..

Kizer: Yeah, the chair. I think I've done that with her,

too. She just.. you have to be so close to her. Come on, now.

Dodson: At least she isn't mad at me, apparently.

Kizer: ...now you stay here, stay here, now. Lay down!

Dodson: I'm glad we didn't hurt her, apparently.

Kizer: No, it interfered with your business here.

Dodson: Well, ha ha.. they'll wonder when they hear the tape, what had happened.

[laughter]

Kizer: Yeah, she's looking for sympathy now.

Dodson: Well, is there something else in the way of earthquakes and water and wars and all that sort of thing that made an impression on you, at the time?

Kizer: Well, uhm, earthquakes.. I've never even felt one until one.. one time in Van Nuys. There was an earthquake that shook the house, but I have never really experienced a big quake. And of course, the water made a big difference here in the valley. You know, we had had just big green ranches... Now these trees out here, these big trees, are pecan trees.

Dodson: Oh, is that right?

Kizer: And at one time _____ , one of the early, early pioneers..

Dodson: Yes, I'm familiar with that name.

Kizer: Yeah, he owned this, all this in here. And it was all in.. uhm... pecan trees. And uh, Margie [sp ?] has squirrels living around here so she never gets to harvest any of them. And they are so old that they... I'm talking about your pecan trees.

Voice: Yeah, they were planted in 1894.

Ferretti: ...?... mean?

Dodson: That's right.

Kizer: So that's 84 years ago.

Voice: And this is part of the ...?... ranch.

Dodson: I see. I didn't know they owned land this far east. I thought they were mainly in the west part of the valley.

Voice: Well, in that book, uhm...

Kizer: Calabasas Girls

Voice: Calabasas Girls, it tells that finally they.. you know they were starving out here..

Dodson: Yes.

Voice: And as they're moving here, and they're... uh... I would say withing the last 25 years the original house was standing right there on the corner of Laurel Canyon and Valleyheart, the street right here,

there's a little grey farmhouse there. And then when they tore it down they put a big apartment house there. But this, they planted eucalyptus trees in rows for a wood crop, and the pecans in rows, for a nut crop.

Dodson: Well that's interesting to know because I have associated them almost entirely with the west part of the valley, and it helps to get them over here. They speak in the book very frequently of going back and forth between Calabasas and Pasadena.

Kizer: Pasadena, uh huh, that's right.

Dodson: But I hadn't placed them with any place between Calabasas and Pasadena.

Kizer: Well, in this.. at that time this was Toluca.

Voice: Yeah, I think this whole area was.

Kizer: Yeah, I think it mentions it. I have the book.

Dodson: Yes, you see, Toluca was the name of the area we now call North Hollywood.

Kizer: Yeah.

Dodson: And then it went from Toluca to Lankershim, and Lankershim to North Hollywood, as far as the names are concerned.

Kizer: And Roscoe up there was named for a famous bad man.

Dodson: Is that right? Now I'm glad to know that because

nobody has told us that.

Kizer: Yes, yeah.

Dodson: Can you tell us any more about that?

Kizer: No. And they finally decided that they didn't want their town named after one of the famous bad men, so they called it Sun Valley now. No, I don't know any thing about him. My dad would've known, I've heard my dad speak of him once in a while.

Dodson: I know that name was changed, but I didn't know where the name Roscoe came from.

Kizer: He was a bandit.

Ferretti: He was from here? From here in the valley?

Kizer: Uh hmm.

Dodson: Well I'll see if I can find that, because I never did know why that name was changed.

Kizer: Yeah, that's why they changed that name.

Dodson: But I did remember when it was called Roscoe.

Kizer: Yeah.

Dodson: And I knew it was changed to Sun Valley.

Kizer: But.. there used to be a house on San Fernando Road, and I don't know whether it's still there or not, but

on top of the house was all glass and portioned, rooms, big rooms. And they said that that was his home where he would, after raiding anything, he would watch up there to see if they were coming for him, you know, and have his guns at the ready. Ha ha ha...

Dodson: I see. I guess some of the these rocks around here, we also had some bad men, didn't we?

Kizer: Yes, yeah.

Dodson: Wasn't one named Vasquez?

Kizer: Vasquez up there? Have you ever been to _____ Rock? I passed it last week we were up there. It's beautiful formation, it's so different from anywhere else.

Dodson: Yes, that is a very pretty, very interesting area.

Kizer: Yeah, yeah. Of course he was running from the law that time, or if there was any law at that time. He was running from something!

Dodson: Well now, some of the people that we've interviewed feel that there was more law then than there is now. How do you feel about that?

Kizer: Well I feel that way, too. I just feel that we are having so much crime now that could be done away with if we would enforce uh, something tragic for them, you know, for those violators.

Dodson: Well we have talked to one person or another who said that he or she as a child, never hesitated to go any-

where, to walk out at night and so on..

Kizer: Well yes.

Dodson: And now they're afraid to leave their houses at night.

Kizer: Yeah, that's true.

Voice: I remember when we lived down in Oxnard, mom, we didn't even have a key. There was no such thing.

Kizer: No, we didn't.

Voice: We didn't own a key to the house.

Dodson: Is that right? Well that's rather tragic. As I say, it's almost as though many people felt themselves, today, to be under siege.

Voice: Uh hmm.

Dodson: That they don't dare leave their houses at night.

Kizer: Yeah. There's so much going on that people are just afraid and it's too bad that it has to be that way.

Dodson: But originally you didn't feel that that was a problem?

Kizer: Oh no, we never ever..

Dodson: That is, you just ....?....

Kizer: ..we never ever had any problem. And even though,

I told you, my parents were the last before they ...?...over the last old stage coach road, these hobos, or whatever they call them. We never had any fear. You know, they'd come to the door and ask for something to eat, my mother would generally give them a sandwich or something. One man stopped one day because he had an awful bad taste in his mouth. He had eaten these things of fruit on a tree, it had looked so good, he had eaten and tasted it and it was olives. And, ha ha ha... he had a bad taste in his mouth... ha ha ha...

[laughter]

Dodson: He didn't realize you don't eat olives off a tree!

Kizer: Oh, we had a big laugh over that. And she did give him something to eat.

Dodson: He must've been a hobo from the east, who have never seen an olive.

Kizer: Ha ha.. evidently.

Dodson: Well what do you think about differences in morality now and then? Do you think there's much difference there?

Kizer: Well it's much more out in the open now than it was then. But I don't know, it seemed like we were always .. all the area, the area of kids that I knew, we were always pretty good kids. We didn't have any of this hanky panky that's going on nowadays, vandalism, and gangs.

Voice: What about, you told me this morning, about some shooting scandal out in Chatsworth?

Kizer: What was...

Voice A lady named Dorothy or something?

Kizer: Huh? I can't remember.

Voice: Oh, your cousin ...?... uh, his wife...?...

Kizer: Oh, that was..

Voice: His wife.. think his grandson was ....?....

Kizer: Oh, that one, that was in recent years, though. Yeah, that wasn't... that I heard after I've moved away from here. That was in recent years, yeah.

Voice: Well that wasn't very recent, remember? That was in ...?...

Kizer: Well 40 years go ... ha ha ha...

Voice: Yeah, ha ha.. ....?.... longer ago than that.

Kizer: It was my cousin. He had a beautiful wife and children, he had three children. And I had never known about the third, but anyway, in a write-up that I read.. why, it mentioned the third child. So I wrote to my cousin.. that I write to anyway, she lives on Palmdale, and I asked her about this third child. And she said that.. that when Priscilla [sp ?] had that baby, he had never been recognized by the father as being his. And he had

come home from work earlier or something, and had found this man there with his wife. And there was some shooting but I don't think anybody was killed. It was just that he... putting off the place, and he'd better be gone and stay gone! But now, in late years... he's the same age I am, this Ernest [sp. ?] and he's very ill and in a rest home. But they say that this younger son has been just everything to him that a son could be.. that he's been for him a lot more than his other two children that he recognizes. That was a little scandal that I hadn't meant to tell!

Dodson: Oh, that's all right.

Voice: That's right, all the juicy parts are the best!

Dodson: Yes, we'd like to know about how things actually are.

[laughter]

But would you say that at that time, it would make a greater scandal than it would nowadays? Do you see a difference there?

Kizer: Yes. Nowadays they probably wouldn't even notice the little man coming home and finding.. his wife.. in his home.

Dodson: So you feel that there is more hanky-panky nowadays?

Kizer: Oh yes. And they got a lot more people.

Dodson: Yes, that's true. In you day, did the teenagers do much smoking or that sort of thing?

Kizer: No, never. In fact, I don't remember anyone in our family.. I don't remember that... Maybe my dad smoked because he gave up smoking. But I believe he did smoke, but we didn't. None of the young people that I knew of smoked. And of course liquor, we never ever say liquor.

Dodson: So there wasn't much drunkenness that you recall?

Kizer: No, no..

Dodson: Nowadays we frequently read about drunken drivers that we wouldn't have...

Kizer: No, there were no drunken drivers, and the thing that we drove was a horse and he knew his way home.

[laughter]

Dodson: Ha ha ha... so if a guy...?.... But in any case, that wasn't a problem?

Kizer: No, no.

Dodson: And one thing we're sure of was that there was no narcotics problem.

Kizer: No, that's true.

Dodson: That is evidently a pretty recent problem.

Kizer: Yeah, yeah, that's right. And I don't know any of that in our family, either. I've got a pretty big family now. I think, last count, grandchildren is about 48.

Dodson: Is that right?

Kizer: And uhm.. with grandchildren and great-grands together. Four more expected at any time!

Dodson: Well, you'll have quite a gathering there if you all get together at one time!

Kizer: Yes, yeah. We have a gathering when we all get together.

Dodson: You do that very often?

Kizer: No, not really. My..

Dodson: I think it'd be rather exciting to get everybody together.

Kizer: My husband died four years ago last November.. February. And they.. all my children came to the funeral. And that's the first time, and I think the last time, that we've all been together at one time.

Dodson: Oh, I see.

Kizer: One reason or another, they can't all make the yearly picnic that we have in Reseda Park. And uh, there's quite a gathering anyway. We used to have these picnics on Mother's Day, and I plan to be here which I ...?... to be here too. But then they got feeling sorry for Dad, and decided to put the picnic between Mother and Father and have one big picnic then. So this year it will be the fourth of June.

Dodson: What do you think about the changes in fashion, between the time that you were a teenager and now?

Kizer: Well, they're different now. Who would've thought, when I was a kid, or wearing pants? And yet now, I just don't want to put on anything else.

Dodson: You mean you have gone...?... ha ha ha...

Kizer: Oh, come on.. but I'll tell you one thing that I don't like to see is these awfully short dresses. That's the only thing that I have.. have disapproved of, otherwise it's all right.

Dodson: Can you tell us what sort of uh, clothes you would've worn when you went to school?

Kizer: Well..

Dodson: Was it a dress or a skirt?

Kizer: .. my mother made our clothes, our mother made our clothes and it was a dress. And when we get home from school, we'd took it off and put on our play clothes that we have around home.. work-play clothes, we have to get out in the garden to hoe weeds or pull garden stuff. We were kept busy once we got home. And that's one thing I think about the kids nowadays. I think if they had something to do, they wouldn't be cooking up all these ideas of knocking windows out, and shooting the neighbor, and ...

Dodson: I guess even the younger children in elementary school would've had things to do..

Kizer: Oh yes, we all had chores, yeah. Somebody would have to milk the cow, feed the cow, and the horse, and we generally had chickens. I'll tell you one incident, my mother canned corn. And we would, in those days, in order to have money we'd buy 100 baby chicks to raise for fryers, and then my dad would take them to the city. And one day she sent some seller to get a can of corn that she had canned. I don't remember.. she must've done the long [?] cooking time because I don't think at that time we had pressure cookers. But anyways, this corn don't smell just right to her so she handed it to my brother and said, I'm not going to cook this, go take it out to the chickens. So he had a hundred chickens, and I had a hundred and the rest of us, but he wanted to favor his chickens so he gave them the can of corn and the next morning his chickens were all dead. And my mother just.. oh she just thanked the Lord that she hadn't gone ahead and prepared that can of corn for her family!

Dodson: Yeah, evidently botchulism.

Kizer: Yes, and she had every..

Dodson: Corn is very dangerous...?...

Kizer: .. every bit of it taken out and buried. And she never canned corn or string beans after that.

Dodson: I think those are two of the most dangerous things to can, unless you do it exactly right.

Kizer: Yeah. And I remember that we did not have a.. pressure cooker at the time so she must've done it

the long cooking period, I think bordering two and a half hours or something like that.. supposed to.. Anyway, that frightened her out of that.

Dodson: Yes. Those two vegetables, bean and corn, could be extremely dangerous to can unless you do it exactly right.

Kizer: Yeah, yeah.

Dodson: Did she do much in the way of preserving fruits and making jellies and that sort of thing?

Kizer: Oh yes, yes. Everything that we raised, nearly, she tried putting away for winter. And we had a cellar and a lot of the vegetable could be kept fresh.. apples, and cabbages, and.. We didn't have apples in our gardens, we'd get them somehow or other.

Dodson: One man that we interviewed told us about pickling walnuts. Have you ever heard of that?

Kizer: I have heard, but..

Dodson: Did your mother ever do that?

Kizer: No.. uh uh. While they're still green..

Dodson: Yes. When I first heard about it, I thought it was a joke because I couldn't imagine pickling walnuts. but he was quite serious.

Kizer: No, no..

Ferretti: ....?....

Kizer: I've never tasted them, even. It doesn't seem like it'd taste real good because that green walnut is bitter. You know, that... when you pull it out, it's real bitter.

Dodson: Well I think we have it recorded on the tape on how to do it, but at the moment I've forgotten. I imagine something is done to get the bitterness out.

Kizer: Evidently, like olives.

Dodson: Yes.

Kizer: Now we used to do olives, by the barrels.

Ferretti: There's olive trees there?

Kizer: Uh hmm.

Dodson: Can you tell us the process you used on the olives?

Kizer: I can't tell you the exact way but I know that they make a lye solution and put the olives in, I think, for three days. And then they'd pour them often and then they keep them in fresh water then, changing it often, until that bitterness is gone. And then they'd put it in salt water then, or brine, and they kept it that way.

Dodson: I see. Now you mentioned lye, did your mother make soap by any chance? Do you recall?

Kizer: Yes, I've known her to make soap, uh huh.

Dodson: Do you recall what sort of a method she used on that?

Kizer: Well I know we saved all the grease that we could.. I don't remember the method but it was lye mixed with grease.

Dodson: I know those are the two important things.

Kizer: Yeah.. I never ever thought about that since then.

Dodson: I guess some people put a little perfume into it to..

Kizer: .. make..

Dodson: .. give a pleasant odor to it and so on.

Kizer: Yeah. It seems strange though, that we would use soap, which is grease, in order to wash off grease!

Dodson: Well with that lye in there, it probably pretty potent.

Kizer: Yes.

Dodson: I imagine that soap is pretty strong then?

Kizer: Oh yes. And you know, in this book it tells how she had to.. the soap never hardens, she scooped it out to do the washing..

Dodson: Yes, I remember that.

Kizer: And her hands would be bleeding from one wash to the other.

Dodson: Yes, that was another rather terrible thing to me.. the effect of scoooping that up and the effect it

had on her hands.

Kizer: I'll take the detergents that we have nowadays.

Dodson: I don't believe you'd make a very good pioneer!

[laughter]

I think you like 1978 better.

Kizer: Well, I surely do.

Dodson: Do you ever look back on the days when you were a child and think you'd like to see this valley just grows again, and wheat fields and so on?

Kizer: No, I have never felt that way.

Dodson: Is that right?

Kizer: But I'll tell you one thing... we used to go to my grandma's up in ....?... ranch and you could look back across at this valley and it would be one orange streak of poppies blooming. You don't see that anymore, except last sunday as we were going to Chatsworth, I happened to know that the Iversons sows poppy seeds over his farm with a helicopter. And I happened to glance up there and there it was.. all abloom, last sunday, just the whole hillside filled with orange color. I do wish that they would.. since poppy is our.. our..

Dodson: State flower..

Kizer: ..state flower, I wish that they would plant them

along road sides and freeways. Of course they're an annual, it's here and gone.

Dodson: Once they're planted they would propagate themselves.

Kizer: They would propagate themselves, yeah. Now Mr. Iverson harvests his also with the helicopter. Well I don't know what they use in the helicopter. He harvests them..

Dodson: Is that to get the seeds?

Kizer: Yeah. And then he'd raise plants, reseed them, and the spraying. We were up there.. when we were up there, and you were with me, he 'd been out cutting wildflowers that day. Had all kinds of wild flowers, but the poppies are predominant.

Dodson: Now I've read that this is a very good year for the California wild flowers, thanks to all of the rain, but I'm wondering where you would go to in order to see them?

Kizer: Well if you would call Mr. Iverson, he would open the gate and let you in. And it's beautiful up there.

Voice: We went up to Lancaster to see them, and there was acres and acres of poppies out there.

Dodson: I see, the road from Lancaster to here, then, would be a good..

Voice: Uh, yeah, you'd go into Lancaster and you go into Avenue I, and then turn west. You go about ten miles

and there's a poppy reserve up there that belongs to the state, evidently, and it's just miles of poppies! We were there about a week ago.

Dodson: I see. What do you think about changes in technology? Do you remember when you had wood.. stoves burning wood and uh, the..

Kizer: I have often said that I have lived, I think, in the most.. and you probably too, in the most.. in the best part of the world, really. We have come from horse and wagon, horseback, and here we are with men walking on the moon and all this.. no, I think it's great! I think of the minds of the men.. and you'd think about it, too, when you're on these freeways and there's four or five levels of freeways down here.. it took an engineer to figure that out.

Dodson: Yes.

Kizer: Didn't our people have minds like that, in my generation, or have they just not been developed? Or what..

Ferretti: They didn't need them because they didn't have automobiles.

Dodson: Yes, it's also true that the minds were just as good. But every invention builds on one that went before. Somebody had to make the first little beginning and somebody else add a little to it, and so on.

Ferretti: They just build..

Dodson: Yes, and often it's the fellow who did the first one who made the greatest contribution. In other words,

the Wright Brothers when they made that first airplane fly.

Kizer: Yeah, yeah, the airplane.

Ferretti: The telephone..

Dodson: Uh hmm, then the other people who added one little gimmick or other to..

Kizer: So I think that I have lived in a wonderful year.

Dodson: I think you may have seen more changes than any other period in history. From the one thing to another, as you say, from the horse and buggy to walking on the moon.

Kizer: Yeah.

Dodson: Which would have seem almost impossible.

Kizer: You look at television and it seemed impossible that we could be..

Dodson: Yes it does.

Kizer: It just seems impossible.

Dodson: We've gotten to accepting these things to the point that we don't realize that sending a picture through the air, in color, is a miracle in itself.

Kizer: That's right. But these kids don't realize.. television may have always been here as far as they're concerned. They don't realize that it's just something they're

enjoying now that we didn't have when we were kids.

Dodson: Well, you really have to stop and think about these things. And to a considerable degree I guess we've become used to them and take them for granted. What would you say has been the most important event in the history of the valley, that you know about, in your lifetime?

Kizer: Well I would say water coming into the valley. Because we were.. it was awfully dry, it was just.. it was just a dry wash, you know, all through here.

Dodson: Do you remember dust storms and that sort of thing in the valley?

Kizer: Oh yes. Mother would have us go in and get in bed and cover up because of those storms.

Dodson: Yes, I've heard stories about those and how badly they were.

Kizer: And sometimes we were even sent to the cellar, and close the door.

Dodson: Is that right? It was that bad?

Kizer: Yeah, that's right.

Dodson: Would the dust get into your houses and cause problems in cleaning?

Kizer: Yes, it'd be an inch deep.

Dodson: Is that so?

Kizer: Oh yes.. through the windows and the doors, cracks in the door and..

Dodson: Do you think that was because of the wide open spaces that the wind could pick it up?

Kizer: I think so. And no dampness at all, it was just dry old sand out of that wash.

Dodson: Were you here during the floods that were in the valley at the time since then? I believe it was about 1938.

Kizer: '38?

Ferretti: ....?....

Voice: I believe she was having a baby then.

Kizer: '38..

Dodson: Somewhere in there, yes.

Kizer: No, Carol [sp ?] was born in '33, but we were living in Oxnard Street in Van Nuys. And the area where Ruthie [sp ?] lives now, that was all flooded. But Ruthie [sp ?] didn't live there then, did she? No, she lived there later.

Voice: Well, when Carol [sp ?] was born there was a flood, because we lived on Erwin Street..

Kizer: Yeah, that's right.

Voice: That was the time when Tyrone just became a river..

Kizer: We called it Tyrone River.

Voice: And uh, the lady you had to help you, she and I went out on New Year's Eve and we were swimming in er.. on Erwin Avenue right in front of our house.

Dodson: Is that right?

Voice: It was a very warm night and we went swimming.

Kizer: Well that was '33.

Voice: Yeah.. right by Erwin and Hazeltine. Tyrone..

Kizer: And I remember when they brought me home from the Valley Hospital. They were going to take me ...?... I think, ...?.... came to get me from the hospital, in the car. And he drove right up to the front door and the car just sunk into the front yard... ha ha.. he didn't get it out for weeks. But that was later, that was... Yeah, that was '33. And the one you're speaking about was '38, and we were living on Van Nuys Boulevard. And Helen and Frank [sp ?] were living with us, and the folks.. his folks from Los Angeles called to see whether.. because they've been uh, having folks go to North Hollywood High School, I believe, or something, for..

Voice: Yeah, rescue.

Kizer: And they called wondering if we were fine or we were...

Dodson: Well I understand that the houses were washed away and that sort of thing.

Kizer: Yes, yes.

Voice: We have some films of that if you ever care to see it. My husband took.. right here along the river, how the.. how the houses were tumbling in.

Kizer: Yeah.

Dodson: I think I saw one picture of the Pacific Electric track just dangling and everything underneath them had been washed off.

Kizer: It doesn't seem that water could be so dangerous.

Ferretti: Yeah.

Voice: All of the bridges except one, crossing Ventura, were out. Everybody had to go on that one bridge to get into town. Down at Tujunga was where they had the most damage. Houses there were just ...?...

Kizer: I remember, I remember going and seeing, just half over, you know..

Dodson: Is that right?

Kizer: You wouldn't have dared gone inside.

Dodson: Do you have any recollections of what the place of our college is located was at that time? That would be at the corner of Fulton and Burbank, between Oxnard and Burbank Boulevard. Do you recall that area at all?

Kizer: No I don't.

Dodson: I know that before we moved there, there was a chicken ranch and a dairy. But I want to know how long back that went.

Kizer: No, I wouldn't know.

Dodson: Is there anything in the history of the valley, in your lifetime, that brought you particular sadness, something happened that you didn't like? Some sort of disaster in the history of the valley that you remember?

Kizer: No, these floods were awful but it didn't affect us, and... Well, no, I can't think of anything that ...

[tape 1 side 2 ends]

Kizer: No, I don't know anything that...

Dodson: That you'd regard as a disaster?

Kizer: Yeah. Of course there's been a lot of things in late years that's been sort of scary. The Manson Case was one, and...

Dodson: Yes.

Kizer: But nothing that's ever affect me in any way.

Dodson: Were you living here at the time of that Manson affair?

Kizer: I can't remember, I don't think I was. But I was here because I remember going to Kelly Johnson's [sp ?] one day and they had been away from home. And they

had come home.. well we sat in the car and waited for them to come home. And then when we went to the front door there was a note on it, that the Mansons had called to see them. And they had a sign somehow or other that they had used. And they lived right close to the spawn ranch, and evidently walking through them or maybe driving, I don't know.. and so I was in this area and heard a lot about it. But uhm, but now Catherine Johnson[sp ?] had said that they had given the ...?... when they had passed through there.

Dodson: I see.

Kizer: And they had happened to be there when they were away that day. Of course I don't know how much they took in the way of... anything they could use. I don't know if they made a living honestly, or they just.. or otherwise.. I don't know.

Dodson: Were you here during the second World War? Or were you living in Modesto at that time?

Kizer: That's it.

Dodson: And the first war though, the first World War you were living in the valley, were you not?

Kizer: I must've..

Voice: She was here during the second World War.

Kizer: Second World War I was here, but not the first.

Dodson: You had moved away before...

Kizer: Yes, because I moved to Modesto in 1913, and I think that was in 1917-18..

Dodson: Yes, our part.. our part began in 1917.

Kizer: Yeah.

Dodson: But you were here in the valley during the second one?

Kizer: Yes.

Dodson: Do you remember anything about shortages of..

Kizer: Oh yes! ...?... rations and standing in line to get certain things..

Dodson: What caused you the most trouble, would you say? What kind of shortages?

Kizer: Well, what we're being told now is the most poisonous thing we eat, I think suger was the most hard to get.

Dodson: But at that time you didn't know any different then!

Dodson: How bout clothing? Were some articles in short supply?

Kizer: Well I especially remember nylons. But we went without em so we didn't stand in, I never ever did stand in a line but we did know people who did, stood for an hour or so waiting to get a nylon or a ration ticket so they could get one. My husband worked then at, what da ya call it TW,?

Dodson: T.W.A ?

Kizer: And he did a job at the uh county forestry at Pacoima and Osborn street which is what they call the warehouse for the Los Angeles County fireman and he was well liked over there and they told him well, why don't you just get a job with us here so he took the civil service examination and got on over there so we never had any kind of hardship. Marjorie, I was tryin to tell him about you workin at the show and he wanted to know, Greenburg [sp ?] was that the?

Dodson: Yes! Was that Sam Greenburgs [sp ?] theater?

Marjorie: No, it belonged to a chain when I worked there.

Dodson: I see.

Marjorie: Uh, I can't think of the name of it but it was a big chain.

Dodson: I think Greenburg had one of the earliest theaters in Van Nuys, maybe the earliest.

Marjorie: Well, you probably remember then. He was a great movie-goer when he was a little boy.

Dodson: I see. So you really didn't suffer much from shortages during the war?

Kizer: No.

Dodson: Do you remember anything about the relationship with Japenese residents from the Valley?

Kizer: We had Japenese friends and I just felt terrible that they had to leave for the concentration camps cause I knew they were not a guilty person at all. And it seemed too bad, we had lots of Japenese friends who had flower fields around Pacoima and uh, I really felt badly about that.

Dodson: Everyon that we've talked to has felt the same way, not one of them has felt any enmity towards the Japenese.

Kizer: No, no and I never have since neither really because I feel, I feel that we sort of in a way knew what was coming that our heads, government heads did.

Dodson: I see. Do you remember that scare in Los Angeles over the presumed air raid? There was one case during the war where apparently there was some feeling that there had been a Japenese plane flying over the city. Do you remember that?

Kizer: No.

Dodson: Now we think that that didn't happen that a plane went over but it wasn't Japenese.

Kizer: Yeah. And I remember when they used to have these big front lights on every plane that came in and my father-in-law was here from Colorado for the first time and he used to sit out in the evening just to watch those flood lights in the sky, he thought that was really something.

Dodson: Did you have much in the way of blackouts, was that required?

Kizer: Yeah. We had to have our windows blacked out.

Dodson: I wasn't here during the war so I don't know much about it.

Kizer: Yes. We had our windows covered with black, black shades.

Dodson: Was there any uneasiness over the danger of being bombed by the Japenese or anybody?

Kizer: I never, ever felt that way.

Marjorie: Neither did I.

Kizer: I don't think we ever felt that way. We blacked out cause we had to you know, it was the thing to do.

Dodson: Do you remember how the news of Pearl Harbor affected you? Do you remember what you were doing when you first heard about it?

Kizer: Well, I was in San Fernando helping the native daughters hold a big dinner for the public. We were making enchalatas that day and word came that Pearl Harbor had been bombed. And I don't remember that we panicked or anything we just went on with the dinner and served a good big dinner. We served maybe about 300 people. That's what I was doing when we heard, got word, of that.

Dodson: Was there any feeling of excitement or anything like that?

Kizer: Oh, I imagine we were all pretty excited but uh

Kizer (con't): was nothing you could do about it, the show must go on.

Dodson: Yes, that's for sure. Since we were speaking of the Japenese, to your knowledge has there been any sort of racial tension in the valley between the various peoples that live here?

Kizer: Not that I know of.

Dodson: Well, that's pretty much the same thing everybody else has told us. So the different groups got along pretty well with everybody?

Kizer: Yeah, yeah. I have a great love for the Japenese people and my daughter has two Korean children, adopted.

Dodson: Is that right?

Kizer: Yes.

Marjorie: You even have a Japenese great-grandchild!

Kizer: Yes. I have a grandson that married a half Japenese girl and they have a little boy. He don't look Japenese, but I do love Japenese people, all that I know.

Dodson: I think we have found statistically that they are the most law-abiding single ethnic group that we have in the Los Angeles area, which says a great deal for them. Uh, you rarely see in the news mention any Japenese name or Japenese that have got into trouble.

Kizer: That's right! That's right, they tend strictly to business. You seldom ever hear anything bad about them, the Japenese people.

Dodson: Can you think of any important historic monuments or sights which still stand in the valley? Do you remember?

Kizer: Well, there is that building in San Fernando that the native daughters have a plaque there.

Dodson: The Pico adobe?

Kizer: Pico adobe, yes. And then the Leonis and Cahuenga.

Dodson: Yes.

Kiser: And the mission of course. Can't think of any others right off.

Dodson: Uh, we have a committee which meets at the college which is trying to find historic sites, old houses which date back to the turn of the century or anything like that in this particular area. Do you know of any?

Kizer: I don't know of any even in Chatsworth anymore.

Marjorie: Your great-grandma, your great-grandmothers house.

Kizer: Oh, but Margie, I have never seen, I have never been on that place to know. How did you know that that house still stands?

Marjorie: Somebody told me. I don't know who.

Dodson: Well, that's right. You have never been up there you say?

Kizer: Huh?

Dodson: To your grandmothers house. You haven't been to it?

Kizer: Well, not since it was sold to this Mr. Brandice [sp ?] Not since my grandmother lived there have I ever been there. So I know that he built, or so I've heard, a mansion in there but wheather or not he moved the old house from the site where it was or tore it down or not, I've never heard.

Marjorie: But I'm sure. Or maybe . ? . saw it when he's been up there making pictures. I think maybe he was the one that told me that it was still there.

Kizer: So, I really don't, I couldn't tell you that that house is still there. It's just what I've heard her say today.

Dodson: Well, that would be very interesting.

Kizer and Marjorie together: Yes, that would.

Marjorie: It's the oldest house in the whole valley probably.

Kizer: Yeah, and now the Iversons . . .

Marjorie: It was built in 1878. . . .

Kizer: Yeah, now the Iversons came there later and they had homes but I'm sure that those homes are gone and new homes built.

Dodson: And so we're trying to get the name and some of their locations to try and get them designated as historical sites to try and preserve them. You've heard about the house on Adams.

Kizer: Yes, uh huh.

Dodson: And apparently all the protests from the public didn't do one bit of good, the house went down just the same. Do you know of any long time residents of the valley that you might suggest that we interview?

Kizer: Well, I was gonna suggest Ethylynn Fraisher but you already know . . .

Dodson: We know about her. . .

Kizer: And um, my cousin that lives on the two acres of my grandma's ranch, and he lives up there.

Dodson: Well, we would be very glad to.

Kizer: And he might give you alot more cause he's lived there all of his life. Sunday he was recognised as the one uh, member of the church who had lived there all of his life. He lived there all of his life in that church. And he's Harold Johnson [sp ?] and uh, all I can tell you is it's the Johnson ranch, eh er, the Brandice ranch, you can call him cause he has a phone. It might be that you could meet him

Kizer (con't): somewhere. He's a custodian around the church. His wife chatters constantly even more than I have today.

Dodson: (Laughter)

Kizer: And uh. . .

Dodson: What you've done today isn't chattering.

Kizer: And uh, I think that he enjoys getting away from his wife for awhile so he goes down to the church and works.

Dodson: (Laughter) So, he's on one of those original two acre sites that your grandmother divided?

Kizer: Yes.

Dodson: Are any other members of the family living on those sites?

Kizer: No. He bought, . . .?. . when we lived in Sherman Oaks, and he bought his two acres when he was, he and his wife were both getting so old that he couldn't, they couldn't, even go up there anymore to see it. He bought it for his daughter, two acres across from the little road from him. So he owns two of them. I don't know now if any of the Greys [sp ?] now the Grey, M.A. Grey family were the people who came and established the church, named the church on Devonshire avenue and I have known, he had a

Kizer (con't) big family, but I don't think any of them live in the valley anymore. And uh, one of the boys I used to be kind of sweet on has since died so .

Voice (interupting): A little while ago she told us that none of the boys out there were worth anything and that she had to go to Los Angeles to find one.

Kizer (laughing): Well.

Dodson: On thinking it over you decided. . . ? . . .

Kizer: Well, oh I'll tell ya we had piano teachers that would come from Los Angeles and voice teachers. I remember a voice teacher and he would come to our house when he knew it was gonna be time for the voice. He's stand out there in front of the door, you know and go, Ahhhhhh (vocalizing) and we'd do the same thing outside. Making fun of me. He wasn't too sweet.

Voice: This is Harold Johnson, Fern. ? . falls road so that would be a, this Fernan [sp ?] would be the name of the ranch. Fern was for Fernando and Ann was for Ann Weldon Johnson and uh that's the cousin that lives there.

Kizer: Now he might, he might give you. . .

Voice: Yeah, he might know alot of other people.

Dodson: I see, and this road is still kept this name?

Voice: Um, huh.

Dodson: Now reading the name.

Kizer: Yeah.

Dodson: In your book. And he would be then, your first cousin?

Kizer: He's my first cousin, couple a years younger than I am. I saw him Sunday. He was even in the pageant that they put on. His dad and mine started many years ago the Southern California Honeycup Bee Company, anyway, when I was a kid we worked with the bees and uh so he came in the pageant with his bee hat on and runnin up like he was gettin away from a hive of bees.

Dodson: Incidentally, if you had been in our museum we have one thing you would have identified probably, we have an old bee smoker.

Kizer: Oh yes!

Dodson: No one can guess what that is. I've had them guess everything under the sun. Unless the person had bees he wouldn't know what that thing was.

Kizer: That's right. I'd have put it on that "Liars Club" on T.V. Have you ever seen that?

Dodson: No, I noticed it in the program but I never. . .

Lilly: Uh huh.

Kizer: Oh, well they have objects that old and I thought about it one day when Gabe . [sp ?] gave you that

Kizer (con't): um spur the other day. Four people tell a story about what this object is and one of them tells the truth, three lies, then the panel has to guess which one is the true story. And I thought about that with those spurs, but I don't see how they could be anything else. But the smoker, well, yes.

Dodson: I doubt that anyone. . . .

Kizer: Most of the things that they have on that program are things that have been donated, I mean left to them to use just to fool the public.

Dodson: We did loan one of our things to appear on television. A model car that we had that was built because of the fact that the First Baptist church of Van Nuys met in a railway car. We have a model of that railway car.

Kizer: Hum.

Dodson: Do you recall that by any chance?

Kizer: No, but Chatsworth, I mean San Fernando had the first Methodist church and that was that old rock church that stood on the corner of fourth and McClay. It's since been torn down, there's something else there now. But that, that should've been preserved.

Dodson: I understand that the Sylmar quake did a lot of serious damage to some of the old structures in San Fernando.

Kizer: I imagine it did.

Voice: That was my home town. Do you remember when you saw your first car?

Kizer: Yes. Well, I remember we were walkin from my grandmother Johnson's and my brother had had a broken arm. I remember cause he had his arm in a sling and this monterous thing came driving by you know, and man did we, the women with their hats tied on you know and no top over the thing you could see right in it. We had heard of cars but we never had seen one before.

Dodson: I know in those days they had regular costumes they wore.

Kizer: Oh, my yes. These horseless carriage clubs tried to dress. . .

Voice: How old were you when that happened?

Kizer: Well, I must've been, we were probably maybe tweleve and ten years old.

Note: Everybody is talking at one time. The text is illegible.

Dodson: I imagine the roads were pretty miserable?

Kizer: Yeah, yeah.

Dodson: Did you like to go to the beach when you were a girl? Was that a popular. . . ?

Kizer: Well, we, Santa Monica was our closest beach and we really didn't get to it a great deal. But one

Kizer (con't): thing about it after the tunnel was built trains started coming out. I think trains came about as far as Chatsworth til they came uh through the tunnels. You know the tunnels were built. But they had excursion once a year to Long Beach and that was a big, big day everybody went. I was gonna tell you about a little incident. My dad was foreman on the tunnels when the tunnels were being built and uh one day a lady came from the train and she asked the agent there if she knew where she could find Will Johnson and she said well yes she knew him really well she'd tell her right when he come, and she came to our house. She was a colored lady, the first colored lady I had ever seen, and um so she asked for Will Johnson and my mother said well that's my husband and she says "Oh no, he's my husband!" My husband is Will Johnson and he's out here workin on the tunnel. Well, my mother says My husbands Will Johnson and he's working on the tunnel. But anyway my mother had her stay and when my dad came home from work she explained it to him. We just fell in love with that lady. She was a dear and I think she stayed a couple a days with us and I think her husband came to see her there at our house. Because he was living in bunks you know on with the crew on the job, and that was my first experience of ever seeing a black person.

Dodson: Were you startled?

Kizer: Well, at first we thought she hadn't washed her face good. (laughter) We thought she surely hadn't washed in a long time. We, uh, before she left we learned to love her and her husband named Will Johnson. We were just kids and that was my first experience with seeing black people.

Dodson: Well, you've been very generous with your time Mrs. Kizer. Can you think of anything you'd like to add to what you've told us that we haven't touched on at all?

Kizer: I pretty well told it all I think.

Dodson: You've certainly told us a great deal that we were certainly glad to get on tape.

Kizer: Well, I'm glad I could be of some help.

Voice: Do you have other cousins that live out there in.

Kizer: Well, not anymore. Harold is the only one that lives there. There really weren't many Johnson boys. My dad had three and they're all gone now. My uncle Charles had four, three of the, four, five, ± are still living. One in Washington, one in Merced and this one, Harold Johnson.

Voice: But Kelly Johnson, the one that now lives in Merced who is the brother of this one, comes down here quite often and once you talk to Harold you'll find out how to get in touch with Kelly when he's here because he's lived here all his life but he just recently married a widow who lives up in Merced. So, a, but he's lived his life in the valley.

Dodson: Well fine, we'd be very glad to meet him if he does come down.

Kizer: Well, you could call him but you probably wouldn't get him till evening cause like I said he works most of the day just choring

Kizer (con't): around the church. He loves his church and that's really his life right there. And nearly always when we go to Chatsworth to see him we stop at the church to see if he's there.

Dodson: Mrs. Tan is your sister?

Voice: Yes. Now after uh, she finds out that my mother's talking she'll be very willing because she'll want to set the record straight.

Dodson: Well, we'll be very glad to see her but after she told me about her health. .

Kizer and voice: She's alright now.

Kizer: She went Sunday with me out there. Yeah, she's fine now.

Dodson: That's good. Well, thank you very much Mrs. Kizer and thank you Mrs. Auster for letting us come. We appreciate this very much.

Kizer: You're more than welcome.